

MCCORMACK SPEAKS AT CANADIAN ALLIANCE RALLY

# Ex-police chief tells voters to support law-and-order parties

BY LISA QUEEN  
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Statistics showing Canadian crime is on the wane are the result of fewer police officers per capita on the streets rather than a safer society, former Toronto police chief Bill McCormack told a Canadian Alliance justice rally in Newmarket.

McCormack, a Queensville resident, said police forces were hiring officers in the 1970s to handle the growing population.

But he complained politicians have put the brakes on recruitment over the past two decades, falsely hoping technology can replace expensive personnel.

However, computers and equipment can't substitute for front-line officers, McCormack told a group of about 60 people at the Newmarket Community Centre Nov. 20.

"You keep cutting back and you keep getting less quality all the time."

When asked by a member of the audience to compare historic per capita policing figures with today's ratios, McCormack acknowledged he had no data to back up his claims.

Still, while he said he isn't endorsing any specific candidate or party, McCormack urged Canadians to vote

for a federal government that stresses law and order issues.

"I have a concern for the future of my children. I have a concern for the future of my grandchildren," he said.

"I see a deterioration in our safety. I see that deterioration becoming more and more evident."

"You need to put people into government who understand and realize your needs and the needs of the community you live in."

*"You are being less protected than before," McCormack told the partisan crowd, which supports a tougher criminal justice system.*

He accused politicians of devoting fewer resources to policing, the administration of justice and the public in need of protection.

"You are being less protected than before," McCormack told the partisan crowd, who support a tougher criminal justice system.

Canada has a justice system that is the envy of the world, but it is in decline.

"We can say this is one of the most wonderful countries in the world, if not the most wonderful country," McCormack said.

"But if we continue to sit on our laurels and hope all these things go away from us and don't deal with them properly at the political level, which is the only level we can deal with them at because it is the proper level, we deserve what we get."

McCormack said while there are positive elements of the Young Offenders Act, such as making sure young people aren't branded for life because of youthful indiscretions, he complained the legislation is ill-conceived.

For example, habitual young criminals have their records wiped clean when they turn 18.

At the same time, while the YOA talks about rehabilitating young offenders, McCormack said, in reality, nothing could be further from the truth.

Instead, young offenders are incarcerated and often go on to more serious crimes. "It's like a college for crime."

Meanwhile, McCormack said victims are often forgotten in the justice system.

Often, plea bargained sentences are worked out for criminals before victims even get a chance to give their impact statements in court.



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